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POPULAR RIMES FROM MEXICO.

FOR the purpose of studying the few Indians remaining upon the banks of the lower Rio Grande in regard to their language and ethnographic peculiarities, I stayed a few days in Matamoros, a commercial town situated on the Mexican side of that sluggish water-course. Through the kindness of the American consul, Mr. Sutton, I obtained there a number of popular rimes, ditties, and satiric songs current among the people of Tamaulipas, the Mexican state in which the above town is situated. They show the originality, quaintness, and freshness inherent to most productions of the popular mind, and this prompted me to copy the large majority of them for publication and to add an intelligible English translation. Wherever a literal translation was not possible, paraphrasing had to be resorted to.

Tamaulipas and the adjacent states were settled at a later period than the central and southern parts of Mexico. The population mostly came from the south, and even now is not very dense. They brought their popular rimes with them, and what is found below may therefore be considered rather as Mexican than as Tamaulipas poetry. The disturbed condition of Mexican politics and the control of the priesthood over the public schools has considerably hampered the progress of education in the numerous states composing the Mexican confederacy, but better times are now apparently coming. The class of people which produces rimes like these is not of a poetical turn of mind, but sober and prosaic; from educated and college-bred Mexicans we can certainly expect productions of a higher degree.

It is a peculiarity of the Mexican dialect to add the diminutive ending *-ito, -ita*, to many nouns and adjectives, where it is perfectly superfluous, and where its use disagrees entirely with that of the literary Spanish. Thus we find it employed in *aguaita*, a small quantity of water; *mansito*, domesticated, when speaking of little or young animals, etc. Some instances of this will be found in the songs, wherever the speaker intends to use a peculiarly kindly or patronizing mode of expression.

Our rimes and ditties may be subdivided into five classes; the first two are sung after well-known, popular melodies.

- A. Satiric rimes and ditties.
- B. Nursery rimes.
- C. Erotic songs.
- D. Riddles and conundrums.
- E. Children's counting-out rimes.

A. SATIRIC RIMES.

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| 1. Aura pelona
de buen parecer :
agarra la aguja
y ponte a coser
las enaguas de tu mujer ! | You bald-headed vulture,
how nice you appear !
get hold of a needle,
sit down and darn up
the gowns of your spouse ! |
| 2. Don Pedró se casó à noche,
y en la madrugada enviudó ;
en busca de su mujer
un malaco encontró. | At dusk Pedro got married,
and in the morning was a widower ;
when searching for his wife
nothing but hoops he found. |

This stricture upon a very inconsiderate marriage must have originated over thirty years ago, as hoops or "crinolines" of an uncommonly large size were then called malakoffs, in Spanish *malaco*, from the celebrated Malakoff tower of Sebastopol, taken during the Crimean War in 1855.

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| 3. Levántate, Bartolito,
por vida de tú nobleza ;
no me hagas que me levante
y te rompa la cabeza. | Get up, get up, lazy Bartolo,
by the honor of your ancestors ;
if you cause me to run after you,
I shall smash your skull to pieces. |
| 4. Pobrecita de Elena,
con que lástima murió !
con tres tiros de pistola
que su marido le dió ! | Helena, O poorest creature !
how terrible was your death !
three times did his pistol fire
your own husband at yourself. |
| 5. Bonito Matamoros
vamos, y lo verás
rodeado de fortines,
y en medio Nicolas.
Colas, Colas,
Colas y Nicolas !
ya no me mando sola,
me manda Nicolas. | Goody town of Matamoros,
let us go there, you will find it
all entrenched and battlemented,
Nicolas sitting in the centre.
Colas, Colas,
Colas and Nicolas.
I the town I do not rule myself,
Nicolas is the real ruler. |

Matamoros is surrounded by a line of small forts on the landside, which are in a rather decayed state at the present time. The above song is sung by the wives of soldiers, who accompany Mexican troops in large numbers, as they have to provide for their nourishment in times of peace and war. Women fulfilled the same office in Mexican armies as early as the epoch of Montézuma and Cortés. Who this Nicolas or Colas was is not known at present ; perhaps an officer or a common soldier.

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| 6. La pata de Santa Ana
la llevan a enterrar ;
con pitos y tambores
la van a acompañar. | The leg of Santa Anna
they carry it off for burial ;
with pipes and drums
the pageant is attended. |
|--|---|

When in 1837 a French fleet besieged Vera Cruz, a cannon ball struck the leg of President Santa Anna, who acted as general in defending the city, and attacked with a small body of soldiers the Frenchmen retreating to their vessels. The leg had to be amputated and was buried at the capital with great display of pomp and festivity. Later on, during a revolt against the government, the populace went in search of this "sacred" relic of a warlike deed, took it out of its place of interment, and threw it upon a dunghill. The term *pata* or *paw* stands for *pierna*, *leg*, and belongs to the vulgar dialect.

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| 7. Secreto de dos
solo Dios ;
secreto de tres
secreto no es. | A secret among two
is possible with God only ;
a secret among three
is no longer a secret. |
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B. NURSERY RIMES.

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| 8. Allá está la luna
comiendo su tuna,
y echando las cáscaras
en la laguna. | Yonder hangs the moon
eating an orange,
and throwing the peeling
into the lake. |
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Tuna is properly the fig of the cactus-tree ; but this fruit has no rind, and therefore I have inserted *orange* into the English version.

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| 9. "Señora Santa Ana,
porque llora el niño ?"
"Por una manzana
que se le ha perdido." | "Mistress Santa Anna,
why does the child weep ?"
"On account of an apple,
which it has lost." |
| "Manzanita de oro,
si yo te hallará,
se la diera al niño
para que callará. | "Little golden apple,
should I discover you,
I would give you to the child
to keep it quiet. |
| "Vamos à la huerta,
cortaremos dos,
una para el niño
y otra para Dios." | "To the garden we go,
two apples we gather,
one for the baby,
the other for God." |

C. EROTIC SONGS.

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| 10. Chiquitita enlutadita,
dime : quién se te murió ?
si se te murió tu amante
no llores, que aquí estoy yo. | Maid, bedecked with blackest mourning,
let me know : whom did you lose ?
if thy lover has gone forever,
weep not ! I will take his place. |
| 11. Cojito si,
cojito no ;
así cojito
lo quiero yo. | Yes, I think,
no, I think ;
the way I think him
so I want to have him. |

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| 12. Naranja dulce,
limon partido;
dame un abrazo,
que yo te pido. | Sweet orange,
divided lemon;
give me a kiss,
that I request you. |
| 13. Allí viene el cojo
por la ventana,
haciendole señas
a Doña Juana. | Now the limpy
seeks the window,
comes and beckons
to his sweetheart. |

D. RIDDLES AND CONUNDRUMS.

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| 14. Chito, chito ; que en el monte grita,
y en su casa está calladita ?
qué es ? (El hacha.) | Hush, hush ! what thing makes noise in
the woods,
but is quiet in his home ?
what is it ? (The axe.) |
| 15. Blanca de casa salí,
en el campo enverdecí,
y blanca à casa volví
qué es ? (El maíz.) | White I left my house,
green I turned on the field,
white I returned home;
what is it ? (Indian corn.) |
| 16. Fué á la plaza,
compré de ella,
vine á mi casa,
y lloré con ella. (La cebolla.) | I went to market,
and bought of it,
I returned home
and wept with it. (The onion.) |
| 17. Largo, largo,
y muy amartillado;
qué es ? (El camino.) | Broad, wide,
and constantly pounded;
what is it ? (The road.) |
| 18. Tres aguilillas volando,
tres tiradores tirando,
cada uno mato la suya,
y tres se fueron volando.
(Las balas.) | Three eaglets are flying,
three hunters are firing,
each one kills his game,
though three flew away.
(The balls.) |
| 19. Mas chiquita che una pulga,
y mas fuerte que una mula ?
(La pólvora.) | What is smaller than a flea,
and stronger than a mule ?
(Gunpowder.) |
| 20. Chiquitita como un arador,
y sube à la mesa del emperador.
(La sal.) | Though tiny as a maggot,
it gets upon the emperor's table.
(Salt.) |
| 21. Redondito, redondon
sino tapo ni tapon. (El anillo.) | Round it is, rounded,
has no cover nor stopper. (The ring.) |
| 22. Oro no es, plata no es,
pues qué es ? (No-es: nuez.) | It is not gold, it is not silver;
what is it then ? (No es: the nut.) |

A play of words between *no es* "it is not" and *nuez* "nut."

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| 23. Tilin, Tilin está colgando,
Tolon, Tolon lo está mirando;
si Tilin, Tilin se cayera,
Tolon, Tolon se lo comiera. | Tilin, Tilin is suspended,
Tolon, Tolon looks at it;
should Tilin, Tilin fall down,
Tolon, Tolon would eat it.
(Fly and spider?) |
|---|--|

E. COUNTING-OUT RIMES.

24. Una dedena cadena
 zumbaca tabaca
 de vidrio vidrión;
 que cuenta las horas,
 que dice que son.

25. Pin, marin, de don, pingué,
 cúcara, macara, pipiré fué.

Both rimes are composed of unmeaning terms.

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| 26. A la rueda del garbanzo

el que caiga es burro manso. | Who falls into the circle of the chick-peas
is a tame donkey. |
| 27. Este era un gato
con los piés de trapo,
y los ojos al revés;
quieres que te lo cuente
otra vez? | This was a cat
with feet of rags
and eyes awry;
do you wish to be counted
over again? |
| 28. La gallina papujada
puso un huevo en el arado,
puso dos, puso tres
puso quatro, puso cinco,
puso seis, puso siete,
puso ocho — tapa coho. | An overfed hen
laid an egg upon the plow,
laid two, laid three,
laid four, laid five,
laid six, laid seven,
laid eight, then closed the lid. |
| 29. Madre y hija fueron à misa,
se encontraron à un Francés;
y el Francés le dijo à la hija:
"que contara diez y seis." | Mother and daughter went to the mess,
both met a Frenchman;
the Frenchman says to the daughter:
"Count up to sixteen." |

The last line of this rime implies, that the four lines have to be recited while another counts sixteen; this makes *four* to each line.

The two satiric songs below were sent to me after the above collection had been set up in type. Readers will therefore consider them as belonging to the *Satiric Rimes*, inserted after No. 7, and be mindful of the fact, that the first of these supplementary rimes is but the fragment of a series of verses. It is supposed to be addressed to a lady importuned by some dudish admirer and runs as follows:—

Si llegó un burro flaco
à tu ventana,
trátelo con cariño,
que es mi retrato ;
a chinita que sí,
a chinita que no.

When a lean donkey
comes to your window,
treat him lovingly,
for he is my portrait ;
curly-haired love, yes,
curly-haired love, no.

Diablo que anda en Castilla,
con vuelillos y golilla,
con vuelillos y golilla,
quién será ? quién será ?
Jesu Cristo ! que fracaso !
yà está aquí ; dejadle paso,
dejadle paso.

The devil who travels through Spain,
with cuffs on and ruffled collar,
with cuffs on and ruffled collar,
who may he be ?
By Jesus ! what a portent !
Here he is ! let him go in peace,
let him pass gently.

Albert S. Gatschet.

Rhyme, rime. The latter spelling of this word, as etymologically the true form (see the etymological dictionaries), is preferred by our *collaborateur*, as by several modern writers. The case seems to be one in which liberty of choice may reasonably be demanded. — GEN. ED.

LEGENDS OF THE CHEROKEES.

AMONG the Western Cherokees, in the Indian Territory, many ancient songs and legends are still preserved, handed down by verbal tradition, from generation to generation. Many of these traditions are scarcely known, even in name, to the half breeds, but among the old full bloods, still attached to the mountains and forests of their long-lost home, they survive in memory. The subjects of these songs and legends are generally deeds of heroes, and love. Others have a religious character.

During the long winter nights, while the Indians are gathered round the hearth fire of their houses, the voice of the story-teller is heard until late in the quiet night, for however often he has heard them related, the Indian is always willing to listen to tales of the days of yore.

But with the full blood Cherokees, these legends and traditions will pass away forever, unless they are saved from oblivion by some lover of Indian folk-lore ; and soon, or it will be too late.

During a visit to the Western Cherokees, in the autumn of 1883, I obtained a few of these legends. My informant was a prominent Cherokee of mixed blood, by the name of William Eubanks, at the time senator at Tahlequah.